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United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General hereby transmits to the General Assembly the report of the Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research on the activities of the Institute for the period from January to December 2015 and the proposed programme of work and financial plan for 2016 and 2017.

The report was considered and approved for submission to the General Assembly by the Board of Trustees of the Institute at the sixty-sixth session of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters, held in New York from 29 June to 1 July 2016. The Board of Trustees welcomed the measurable improvement on nearly all challenges faced by the Institute in 2015. At the same time, it emphasized the need to ensure the Institute's operational sustainability and independence, reiterating its previous recommendation that the subvention to the Institute be increased on a sustained basis to fund the institutional framework required for the development, management, implementation, reporting and evaluation of project activities in conformity with United Nations rules and procedures. In this connection, the Board reiterated its recommendations contained in paragraphs 39 and 44 of A/70/186, that the subvention should cover the costs of all five staff posts of the Institute.

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Report of the Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research on the activities of the Institute for the period from January to December 2015 and the proposed programme of work and financial plan for 2016 and 2017

Summary

The present report covers the activities and financial status of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) during the period from January to December 2015, the ongoing programme of work and financial plan for 2016, and the proposed programme of work and financial plan for 2017. It was prepared in accordance with General Assembly resolution 39/148 H, in which the Assembly invited the Director of UNIDIR to report annually to the Assembly on the activities of the Institute. The report highlights the achievements of the Institute during the above-mentioned period, as well as its current institutional and financial situation.

The mission of UNIDIR is to generate and leverage knowledge to improve disarmament and security policies, programmes and practices. It fulfils this mission through four research programmes: weapons of mass destruction, conventional weapons, emerging security issues, and security and society, as well as through the support it provides to the disarmament community. At a time when the multilateral disarmament machinery struggles to deliver results, UNIDIR has continued to fulfil its mandate in the service of Member States, filling a critical niche of fact-based analysis, fresh ideas on emerging issues and new perspectives.

The year 2015 marked the Institute's thirty-fifth anniversary. This offered an opportunity for Member States not only to reflect on the Institute's contributions, accomplishments and added value but also to ensure a more secure, resilient and sustainable financial foundation for its work, following adoption by consensus of resolution 70/69 concerning the Institute.

The year 2015 was also a year of transition and stabilization for UNIDIR. While the survival of the Institute was in doubt at the beginning of the year, the situation had stabilized by the end of the year, with the most urgent administrative and financial challenges having been resolved.

A key part of the efforts to stabilize the Institute was enhanced resource mobilization. Despite a challenging backdrop, with many contributors having experienced budgetary cutbacks of their own, those efforts bore fruit. Another important factor behind the Institute's financial stabilization was full and consistent application of cost recovery.

While 2015 was a year of transition and stabilization, in 2016 the Institute has embarked upon realizing its vision of a more resilient and sustainable Institute. It will entail a less reactive operating model and a more secure future for the Institute, enabling the Institute to overcome administrative challenges and empowering management and staff to plan more strategically for the Institute's direction. The goal is for the revitalization of the Institute to be concluded by the end of 2017. At the same time, to become more resilient, the Institute must start growing again. After successive staff cutbacks over the years, UNIDIR remaining institutional resources can no longer be leveraged to generate the desired level of substantive activity.

I. Introduction

1. Over the past 36 years, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) has built an international reputation for innovation and problem-solving. At a time when the multilateral disarmament machinery has struggled to deliver the expected results, UNIDIR has continued to fulfil its mandate, filling a critical niche with thought leadership through fact-based analysis, new ideas on emerging issues and fresh perspectives, and acting as a convener and facilitator in multilateral disarmament-related matters. In short, UNIDIR generates and leverages knowledge to improve disarmament and security policies, programmes and practices.

2. The present report covers the activities and financial status of UNIDIR during the period from January to December 2015, the ongoing programme of work, revenue and expenses for 2016 and the proposed programme of work and projections for 2017.

II. Current strategic environment for security, arms control and disarmament

3. The current period is one of significant geopolitical uncertainty. New regional and global powers are arising, while other established powers seek to remain at the first rank. This creates particular challenges, both for prioritizing collective action in the context of disarmament and broader international security, and for the stability and durability of the multilateral system as a whole. It also increases the risk of global and regional arms races as the nuclear-armed States modernize their nuclear arsenals and some States seek to develop new capabilities that could arguably add to strategic instability, including hypersonic missiles, cyberoperations, drones and increasingly autonomous weapons.

4. The international community faces security issues that are complex and interconnected, and often involve non-state actors, sometimes in contexts that span from criminal activity to terrorism and intra-state and international conflict. Examples include trafficking in illicit small arms and light weapons or fissile material, the widespread use of improvised explosive devices and cyberattacks on critical infrastructure. Effective disarmament responses in such contexts may depend as much upon ensuring sustainable development and reducing stark levels of corruption and inequality, better law enforcement and justice, avoiding failed State situations and addressing other root causes at the local, national and regional levels, as upon legal disarmament or arms control agreements.

5. There is thus a need for disarmament and arms control efforts to be joined up as elements of the toolkit for improving strategic stability and the pursuit of a more secure, just and peaceful world. It follows that breaking the deadlock in the United Nations disarmament machinery and modernizing its approach are critical to enabling real progress, in the words of the statute of the Institute, "towards greater security for all States and towards the economic and social development of all people". UNIDIR, in accordance with its mandate, is engaged in assisting in such efforts across a range of policy areas.

6. In this regard, UNIDIR is actively linking its research agenda to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the Sustainable Development Goals

(General Assembly resolution 70/1). UNIDIR, as a member of the United Nations family, is committed to the implementation of the Goals. It is doing this through mainstreaming a development dimension[1] in its project development tools as well as through activities with explicit linkages to the Goals, such as the project on the reverberating effects of explosive force.

7. As the first step in operationalizing the components of the revitalized substantive programme of work for UNIDIR, in early 2016, the Institute engaged with a number of external stakeholders in consultations on its research agenda and future direction to maximize its relevance and sustainability in a rapidly changing geopolitical context and to ensure the Institute understands what the broader disarmament community is likely to need from it as a thought leader and convener on disarmament matters in coming years.

8. The consultations indicate that, while every external stakeholder has their preferences, the Institute's research agenda responds to the expressed needs and desires of its stakeholders. The mandate given to UNIDIR in 1984 was forward-looking and broad enough for the Institute to both respond to new security issues (and linkages to economic and social development) and to focus on more traditional disarmament items in innovative ways. Thus, the Institute's ability to undertake new activities or expand existing ones is limited only by the funds provided to do so.

III. Programme of work

A. Performance information for 2015: status of completed or ongoing projects

9. The year 2015 marked the Institute's thirty-fifth anniversary and was a year of transition and stabilization for UNIDIR. The transition to Umoja focused attention on the need for UNIDIR to be fully embedded in the administrative and financial practices of the Organization. This sustained attention helped to positively resolve many long-standing issues. The information presented below is based on actual accomplishments for the period from January to December 2015, with a number of those activities continuing in 2016.

10. At the same time, UNIDIR successfully enlarged its substantive work programme and diversified its funding. The number of donors increased from 20 in 2014 to 31 in 2015, and for the first time in many years, a major private foundation was among the top funders (pledges of $100,000 or above) and total voluntary contributions for 2015 compared well with the levels in previous years.

11. The substantive work of UNIDIR continues to be divided into four research programmes: weapons of mass destruction, conventional weapons, emerging security issues and security and society.

12. In 2015, UNIDIR conducted 22 individual projects, held 34 conferences and seminars[2] and issued 21 publications. UNIDIR staff also participated in numerous

[1] For more information on how the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) links its work to development issues, see www.unidir.org/about/the-institute/development.

[2] A number of the meetings were single events, not part of a larger research project. Thus, the full scope of activities in 2015 includes projects listed in this section and in section B.5.

international conferences and events held by or in cooperation with partner organizations. During the period covered by the present report, UNIDIR staff were invited to make presentations at events held in China, Kenya, Mexico, Oman, the Russian Federation South Africa, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America, among others.

13. While individual projects and activities conducted during the reporting period are referred to in the present document, detailed information about specific projects and outputs is available on the Institute's website (www.unidir.org).

1. Weapons of mass destruction

14. The statute of UNIDIR gives high priority to work aimed at the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons. The continued impasse in the Conference on Disarmament, the failure of the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to agree on a substantive outcome, and the continued centrality of nuclear weapons in some national security doctrines indicate a continued need for UNIDIR activities in support of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

(a) Humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, "The humanitarian initiative and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons"

15. During the third phase of the multi-year project, which concluded in June 2015, the Institute produced five thematic briefing papers for the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, held in 2015. UNIDIR also continued to collaborate with the International Law and Policy Institute in jointly publishing comments on topical nuclear disarmament issues on a site discussing effective measures for nuclear disarmament.[3]

(b) Humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, "'Effective measures' and the humanitarian discourse on nuclear disarmament"

16. In the fourth phase of the project, which continues into 2016, the Institute embarked on a critical analysis of new ideas for effective measures recently prominent in the policy discourse with a view to offering an objective assessment of their strengths and weaknesses. The analysis resulted in a joint publication with the International Law and Policy Institute, entitled "A prohibition on nuclear weapons: a guide to the issues", in early 2016.

(c) Support for the Group of Governmental Experts

17. The Institute was the expert consultant to the Group of Governmental Experts to make recommendations on possible aspects that could contribute to but not negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (fissile material cut-off treaty), established by the Secretary-General pursuant to General Assembly resolution 67/53. The Institute participated in the four sessions of the Group, held in 2014 and 2015, and provided background papers and advice as requested by the Chair (for the report of the Group of Governmental Experts, see A/70/81).

[3] Available from http://unidir.ilpi.org.

(d) Technical aspects of a fissile material cut-off treaty

18. In 2015 and 2016, a seminar series was organized by the Institute, exploring key technical issues identified in the course of the work of the Group of Governmental Experts (see para. 17 above). The objective was to help all participants in the deliberations on fissile material cut-off treaty to examine the problems involved, explore the technical solutions that may be available or that need to be developed, maintain the constructive momentum initiated by the work of the Group of Governmental Experts and make a practical contribution to resolving the outstanding issues in future negotiations.

(e) Background documentation prepared for the Office of Disarmament

19. With a view to realizing the objectives of the resolution on the Middle East adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (see NPT/CONF.1995/32 (Part I), annex), UNIDIR authored a background paper on the implementation of that resolution, at the request of the Office of Disarmament Affairs, in advance of the 2015 Review Conference.

(f) Seminars in support of the ninetieth anniversary of the Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare

20. 2015 marked the ninetieth anniversary of the Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare (1925 Geneva Protocol). The seminars, held on the margins of meetings of the States parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (Biological Weapons Convention), sought to reaffirm the continuing relevance of the Protocol, particularly as the international community looks towards the Eighth Review Conference of the Parties to the Convention, to be held in November 2016.

2. Conventional weapons

21. The Institute carries out its activities concerning conventional weapons by developing targeted tools, offering capacity-building and designing improved processes and better methods of stakeholder cooperation and collaboration. The focus of current activities is threefold: weapons and ammunition management in fragile settings, tackling the illicit global arms trade and support for the implementation of global instruments and guidelines.

(a) Measuring, prioritizing and evaluating efforts to implement small arms and light weapons controls

22. The third phase of a project involving capacity-building on small arms management through regional workshops on the use and integration of the International Small Arms Control Standards software tool concluded a multi-year project. The knowledge management software tool assists United Nations agencies, States and civil society in implementing standards in the design, monitoring and evaluation of small arms control policies, programmes and practices and is freely

available from the website of the Coordinating Action on Small Arms (www.smallarmsstandards.org/tools/).

(b) Weapons and ammunition management in Somalia

23. The objective of the second phase of the project on weapons and ammunition management in Somalia, which extends into 2016, is to enhance the capacity of national lawmakers and relevant security authorities in Somalia tasked with supporting or leading the review of national frameworks related to weapons and ammunition control. The project is a concrete example of helping one Government build capacity, provide security to its people and protect its territory. UNIDIR has partnered with the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia, the Mine Action Service and the United Nations Development Programme and is looking to expand this innovative work.

(c) Practical implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty to address diversion

24. The first phase of project on the practical implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty examined options and models for harmonizing end-use and end-user control systems in order to strengthen measures against arms diversion, with the aim of assisting States in their implementation of the Treaty.

(d) International Small Arms and Ammunition Guidance Platform

25. In response to needs expressed by field practitioners, the objective of the International Small Arms and Ammunition Guidance Platform project is to improve the understanding, accessibility and applicability of control measures that apply to both small arms and their ammunition in a conflict and/or post-conflict setting. Building upon the International Small Arms Control Standards assessment tool (see para. 22) and the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines, the project developed a software tool to conduct security and basic safety assessments of arms and ammunition stockpiles and storages. In the first phase, the prototype was tested and validated in four field missions and informal technical consultative meetings on arms and ammunition management were arranged, as were international and regional workshops and events.

(e) Promoting a coordinated and effective international approach to addressing improvised explosive devices

26. The project considered how the international community might address improvised explosive devices in a more coordinated and effective manner. It consisted, inter alia, of a two-day expert residential workshop, a joint report by the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies and UNIDIR, entitled "Addressing improvised explosive devices: options and opportunities to better utilize United Nations processes and actors". The study, released in October 2015, should assist the Secretary-General in preparing his report on the issue of improvised explosive devices, for submission to the General Assembly at its seventy-first session, in accordance with resolution 70/46.

(f) Gender-based capacity-building on small arms and light weapons control and awareness-raising in Libya

27. The objective of the project was to build capacity of women in local communities in Libya to raise awareness and educate other community members on the risks associated with small arms and their ammunition, and to integrate relevant risk reduction education tools into their own programming on small arms control. The project was developed and implemented jointly by the Mine Action Service and UNIDIR and will continue in 2016.

3. Emerging security issues

28. Advances in science and technology may enable new methods, means and even domains of warfare, thereby raising unique questions about security, stability, law and ethics. UNIDIR work on emerging security issues currently addresses cybersecurity, information security, outer space and the weaponization of increasingly autonomous technologies. The Institute's research and analysis frames complex challenges in accessible ways. It provides expertise and critical support to advance nascent policy processes. Through its convening power, UNIDIR helps to advance discussions on specific issues and places great importance on the involvement of all stakeholders, including the private sector. Its work emphasizes maintaining the beneficial uses of sophisticated technologies for peaceful purposes.

(a) Weaponization of increasingly autonomous technologies: addressing competing narratives

29. Under the second phase of a multi-year project addressing the weaponization of increasingly autonomous technologies, UNIDIR continues to focus on the areas in which it can bring added value to international discussions on autonomy. The current phase privileges cross-disciplinary topics, in which critical issues require discussion and consideration beyond the traditional stakeholders of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons), such as the private sector, scientists involved in research and development, cyberrelated issues, artificial intelligence, risk management, and experts from other relevant disciplines and communities of practice. The outputs of the second phase, which will continue in 2016, include several events, expert meetings and observation papers.

(b) International law and State behaviour in cyberspace

30. The project, which comprised a series of meetings and concluded in 2015, focused on raising awareness and encouraging dialogue at the regional level with regard to the various interpretations of the applicability of international law in cyberspace. Following the regional workshop held in Seoul in 2014, the second and third workshops were held in Nairobi, in March 2015, and in Muscat, in June 2015.

(c) Support to the Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security

31. In 2014 and 2015, the Institute again acted as the expert consultant to the Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and

Telecommunications in the Context of International Security, which adopted its consensus report in June 2015 (see A/70/174).

(d) Cyberstability conference series

32. The theme of the 2015 cyberstability conference, which was held in Geneva on 9 July 2015, was "Regime coherence". The 2016 conference was held in June 2016, in collaboration with the Center for Strategic and International Studies as partner. It explored the ripest areas for progress in the next phase of work of the Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security.

(e) International cybersecurity issues expert workshop series

33. The Institute and the Center for Strategic and International Studies held a series of three invitation-only expert workshops on international cybersecurity issues, prior to the commencement of the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security for 2016-2017. The meetings helped identify areas of common understanding and of divergence on a number of cybersecurity issues, including on norm development, legal measures and possible approaches to the malicious use of cybertools.

(f) Realities of Middle Power Space Reliance

34. The study entitled "The Realities of Middle Power Space Reliance" provided a strategic, security-focused overview of the considerations and options available to Space Middle Powers in order to best position themselves for securing long-term sustainable access to space-based services.

(g) Outer space security conference series

35. The theme of the 2015 space security conference, which was held in Geneva on 24 and 25 August 2015 with long-term partners Secure World Foundation and the Simons Foundation, was "The foundations of space security". The 2016 conference, which was the fourteenth edition, took place in Geneva on 28 and 29 April 2016, on the theme "Sustaining the momentum: the current status of space security".

(h) Association of Southeast Asian Nations regional forum seminar on international law and space security

36. The Institute hosted a luncheon and seminar, on the margins of the third Association of Southeast Asian Nations regional forum seminar on international law and space security, to help stakeholders develop their understanding of the dual themes of transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities and space security and international law. It also allowed UNIDIR to build on the success of its regional capacity-building seminars on outer space, with the aim of building deeper understanding among key policy actors.

4. Security and society

37. In the area of security and society, UNIDIR focuses on cross-cutting, multidisciplinary approaches to security issues that have wider societal ramifications

in such areas as health, development, peacekeeping and peacebuilding, and human rights. It is also where UNIDIR builds networks of stakeholders beyond the security and arms control community, for example, experts in artificial intelligence and ethics, technology entrepreneurs, medical professionals and design specialists.

(a) Research and development for an evidence-based design tool for reintegration programming

38. The multi-year project on an evidence-based design tool for reintegration programming concluded in 2015. The third phase of the project offered recommendations with regard to next steps for the Inter-Agency Working Group on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration and its member organizations to make evidence-based design available for use by reintegration practitioners and on how to incorporate it into the Working Group's training programme on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, emphasizing the critical shift from best practices to best processes.

(b) Reverberating effects of explosive force

39. The pilot project on the reverberating effects of explosive force, which continues in 2016, contributes to understanding about the nature and impacts of the use of explosive force in populated areas, particularly those downstream from the immediate blast and fragmentation of explosive weapons. Central questions to be explored are the ways in which reverberating effects of explosive force could affect the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, and what the international community needs to know in order to develop appropriate responses.

(c) Support for the United Nations study on unmanned aerial vehicles

40. The Institute supported the Office of Disarmament Affairs in organizing an international expert workshop on unmanned aerial vehicles in June 2015 and drafted a section of the study on emerging technologies prepared on the recommendation of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters.

5. Other activities

(a) Consultative and advisory services

41. In accordance with its statute, UNIDIR work shall aim at, inter alia, "Promoting informed participation by all States in disarmament efforts", "Assisting ongoing negotiations on disarmament" and "stimulating new initiatives for new negotiations". In practice, this is often accomplished through the provision of advisory services, usually on a pro bono basis. The number of requests for such services far exceeded the capacity of staff to respond to each and is a significant indicator of the value and reputation of UNIDIR work.

42. UNIDIR staff (both institutional and research) provided support to the work of, among others, the Chair of the Meeting of Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. UNIDIR staff also advised presidents of the Conference on Disarmament and other office holders at their request, and moderated the four panels of the Civil Society Forum of the Conference on Disarmament convened by the Secretary-General of the Conference, on 19 March 2015.

43. Apart from Member States and office holders of disarmament bodies, requests come from within the United Nations system, from regional groups, from international, multilateral and regional organizations and from research institutes, academic bodies, the media and civil society. Staff are regularly called upon to advise, consult with or brief interested parties, as well as to make presentations in international meetings and conferences, and such work continues in 2016.

44. While Member States expect UNIDIR staff to provide advice and support, such activities are rarely covered by dedicated project funding. This is an issue for research staff in particular, for whom such requests necessitates work over and above their existing full-time project work.

(b) Disarmament education

45. In fulfilling its mandate to provide the international community with more diversified and complete data, studies and analyses, UNIDIR considers disarmament education to be an important part of its activities and it will continue to be so in 2016. In addition to its briefings with student groups, UNIDIR supported the Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Training Programme of the office of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) in Hiroshima, Japan, as well as a disarmament negotiation simulation run by the former Minister for Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, at the University of Geneva.

(c) Arms Trade Treaty Network

46. UNIDIR, the Small Arms Survey, the Geneva Centre for Security Policy and the Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding of the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies have established the Arms Trade Treaty Network, a forum to collaborate on a regular basis to support the implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty, which will continue its work in 2016.

(d) Gender mainstreaming

47. In line with United Nations policy, UNIDIR is committed to gender equality. This includes the full participation of women and girls in all matters related to peace, security and disarmament. UNIDIR seeks to incorporate a gender perspective into its work and has joined the International Geneva Gender Champions initiative, which will be an ongoing project in 2016.

B. Institutional performance for 2015

48. An overview of the activities carried out by institutional staff to support the Institute's projects and activities, as detailed in the previous section, is presented below and is based on actual accomplishments for the period from January to December 2015. In addition, as UNIDIR engages research staff on a per project basis, the Director, the Deputy to the Director and the Chief of Research are all expected to carry substantive portfolios and expertise, both to conceive and implement projects, but also to respond to requests for ad hoc expertise and consultations.

1. Project development and fundraising

49. As UNIDIR does not have a standing cadre of research staff (researchers are hired for specific projects, and as of 2015 typically on short-term consultancy contracts), the majority of new project conceptualization and development lies with institutional staff. Development of a new project begins with an idea, and then must be rigorously investigated for originality and feasibility. Only intellectual concepts that remain feasible following this process move on to a project plan and an external project proposal. Once the project proposal is complete, institutional staff actively fundraise to secure financing.

2. Funding agreement development

50. Following a pledge from a prospective funder, institutional staff work with the funder's legal and financial departments to prepare a funding agreement. Agreements are also negotiated and signed with all of the Institute's institutional funders.

3. Project implementation and oversight

51. Institutional staff are responsible for monitoring each activity's implementation. This includes contractual arrangements, procurement, regular meetings with project staff to monitor progress, the evaluation of project staff, consultants and contractors, disbursement of payments and project evaluation. As the majority of UNIDIR activities are undertaken by researchers on consultancy and/or institutional contracts, engagement, supervision and evaluation of research personnel is a constant activity undertaken by institutional staff.

4. Donor reporting

52. After a project's implementation, institutional staff assist research staff in finalizing the narrative part and prepare the financial component of the reports for the funder. The reporting templates required by funders can differ greatly and funders are rarely in a position to accept the use of the United Nations or UNIDIR standard template.

5. Organizing conferences and other events

53. Institutional staff are responsible for event management. In 2015, UNIDIR organized or co-organized the 34 events listed below, all of which required a substantial amount of work from institutional staff, including sending out invitations, keeping track of responses, sending out reminders, reserving space, arranging for audio recordings and arranging catering. The list of events that follows is presented in reverse chronological order:

(a) 1925-2015: the Geneva Protocol at 90, held in Geneva on 15 December

(b) International law and space security, held in Beijing on 30 November

(c) Considering the drivers for the weaponization of increasingly autonomous technologies, held in Geneva on 11 November

(d) Improvised explosive devices: options for strengthening the international response, held in Geneva on 10 November

(e) Expert group meeting "Convergent technologies, divergent responses? Autonomous weapons, cyber and autonomous intelligence", held in Geneva on 9 and 10 November

(f) "Initiating a global dialogue on strengthening end-use and end-user control systems: can harmonization help tackle diversion?", held in Geneva on 27 October

(g) Applying small arms and ammunition guidelines in conflict-affected areas: lessons learned and tools for solutions, held in New York on 26 October

(h) Security through safety: linkages between space security and international initiatives for space sustainability at the United Nations, held in New York on 22 October

(i) Briefing by the Director of UNIDIR to Member States, held in New York on 13 October

(j) Cyberweapons and autonomous weapons: potential overlap, interaction and vulnerabilities, held in New York on 9 October

(k) "A nuclear-weapon-free zone in Europe: Utopian pipedream or realistic policy option?", held in Geneva on 4 September

(l) Examining options and models to enhance cooperation and strengthen end-use and end-user control systems, held in Cancun, Mexico, on 25 August

(m) Space security 2015: underpinning foundations of space security, held in Geneva on 24 and 25 August

(n) From the Geneva Protocol to the Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons: lessons learned and opportunities, held in Geneva on 12 August

(o) Implications and lessons learned from the Ebola virus disease outbreak for the Biological Weapons Convention, held in Geneva on 7 August

(p) Informal consultative meeting on options for harmonization of end-use and end-user control systems, held in Geneva on 9 July

(q) Cyberstability seminar 2015: regime coherence, held in Geneva on 9 July

(r) Capacity-building on national frameworks for weapons and ammunition management: first consultative process, held in Mogadishu from 22 to 25 June

(s) "Nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament: where to after the 2015 NPT Review Conference?", held in Geneva on 18 June

(t) Looking to the future: expert perspectives on global cyberpolicy, held in Geneva on 16 June

(u) International seminar on improving transparency, oversight and accountability for any use of armed unmanned aerial vehicles outside of armed conflict, held in Geneva on 15 and 16 June

(v) The international community and improvised explosive devices: building coordinated process and responses, residential workshop, held in Geneva on 8 and 9 June

(w) International law and State behaviour in cyberspace meeting series: Eurasia regional seminar, held in Muscat in 3 and 4 June

(x) Capacity-building on weapons identification and tracing in conflict and post-conflict settings, held in New York on 4 June

(y) Humanitarian impact: why ethics is important to the politics of nuclear weapons, held in New York on 8 May

(z) Conference on a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East: how to overcome the obstacles, held in New York on 1 May

(aa) Informal expert group meeting on examining options and models for harmonization of end-use and end-user control systems, held in Vienna on 22 and 23 April

(bb) Director's briefing to Member States, held in Geneva on 21 April

(cc) Meeting of experts on transparency and lethal autonomous weapons systems of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, held in Geneva in April

(dd) Military spending in a time of tension, held in Geneva on 13 April

(ee) The principles of self-defence in space: national perspectives and critical issues, held in Geneva on 31 March

(ff) Biological Weapons Convention: fortieth anniversary event, held in Geneva on 30 March

(gg) Workshop in support of the Hague code of conduct and ballistic missile non-proliferation, held in Geneva on 18 March

(hh) International law and State behaviour in cyberspace meeting series: Africa regional seminar, held in Nairobi on 3 and 4 March

6. Communications and outreach

54. Communications and outreach are essential to transmitting the Institute's research results and impact to the global community. All publications or written outputs are either processed by institutional staff, or are treated by consultants supervised by institutional staff, with tasks including copy-editing, page layout, maintaining the publications database, proofreading and distribution and producing flyers. Institutional staff are responsible for a variety of web-related outputs, from preparing and sending the Institute's e-newsletter to editing audio recordings of conferences. Institutional staff take the lead on UNIDIR social media presence, which saw steady growth in 2015.

55. The level of awareness of the breadth and quality of the Institute's activities could be much higher. The task of raising greater awareness of the Institute's work, however, continues to be hindered by the lack of any dedicated communications staff since 2013, owing to a lack of institutional funding.

7. Travel

56. Only institutional staff have Umoja access and they are therefore responsible for organizing travel, for staff, consultants and invited panellists at meetings. Following United Nations travel procedures, the related actions include the registration of individuals and banking information in Umoja; informing sponsored participants about travel rules and regulations; making travel arrangements for participants; the creation of travel authorizations; and assisting in the preparation of participants' expense reports.

C. Resources and expenditure for 2015

57. The Institute's revenue in 2015 was 2,967,653 and total expenditure was 2,073,845, as shown in annex II, table 2. The financial information contained in the present report is presented according to the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) for the first time. An explanation of the key differences between United Nations system accounting standards and IPSAS is found in annex I. The perceived decrease in revenue in 2015 is the result of a difference in accounting systems as the United Nations transitions from United Nations system accounting standards to IPSAS, in particular the change in the recognition point for voluntary contributions. Under IPSAS, contributions are accounted for in the year in which the pledge is signed, for present as well as for future years. As a consequence, a number of significant disbursements to the Institute are not reflected in the 2015 accounts.

58. Most of the total amount of voluntary contributions was earmarked for specific projects. Projects and activities receive funding on a rolling basis throughout the year. Thus, annual and biennial budgeting is of an indicative nature. Advance planning figures are based on an assessment of the Institute's desired accomplishments for the year and an assessment of historical trends in funding.

D. Activities, resources and expenditure for 2016

59. Several projects that started in 2015 are ongoing in 2016, as outlined above. In addition, UNIDIR commenced the following new projects in the first five months of 2016:

(a) Nuclear disarmament verification overview

60. Regardless of any agreement being reached on the way forward in nuclear disarmament, mechanisms must be agreed upon among nuclear weapon possessors and non-possessors to verify the destruction of nuclear armaments in the ultimate phase of achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world. The project will shed light on how to link a simple prohibition and the actual elimination of nuclear weapons, focusing on identifying legally binding precedents for achieving their verifiable elimination.

(b) Short-range nuclear weapons in today's Europe: stepping stones for restrictions and reductions

61. The project, which will extend into 2017, will examine the proposals that call for the withdrawal of non-strategic weapons to permanent storage in Europe, in order to identify areas of agreement, issues to be resolved and problems associated

with the practical implementation of this approach. Special attention will be paid to trust and confidence-building measures that could demonstrate the feasibility of this approach and facilitate dialogue between the United States and the Russian Federation with the active participation of States members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and partners.

(c) Practical implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty to address diversion

62. Building on a successful first phase, which considered how end-use and end-user control could strengthen measures against arms diversion, the second phase of the project focuses on promoting regional dialogue to enhance cooperation and strengthen end-use and end-user controls.

(d) International Small Arms and Ammunition Guidance Platform

63. The second phase of the project aims at the finalization of the weapons and ammunition management tools and at the launch of the Platform. It will also involve one informal consultative meeting on weapons and ammunition management in fragile settings and national assessment workshops.

(e) Support for the Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security

64. UNIDIR has been selected as expert consultant for the Group of Governmental Experts, which was established by the General Assembly and, pursuant to its resolution 70/237, will commence its work in August 2016.

(f) Support for the Open-ended Working Group to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons

65. UNIDIR plans to convene a seminar in New York to focus on elements of and pathways to nuclear disarmament that featured prominently during the meeting of the Open-ended Working Group to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons. The event and an accompanying background paper will complement the efforts of the Chair of the Working Group to inform the General Assembly's consideration of the Working Group's report during its seventy-first session. In this regard, it will also help to build awareness and capacity among small missions that were not able to attend the meetings of the Working Group on a regular, for instance, those Member States represented in New York but not in Geneva.

(g) Understanding the causes of nuclear weapon risk

66. Since 2010 there has been increased interest in the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons detonation among policymakers, the media and the public, drawing attention also to the need to better understand the causes and level of risk of their use. The project will culminate in 2017 in published papers and a symposium that gathers risk experts and multilateral practitioners to explore the causes of nuclear weapons risk and inform the nuclear disarmament community.

67. A number of additional project proposals are currently at an active fundraising stage. The 2016 programme of work will depend on the funds secured throughout

the year for project activities. In 2016, special emphasis is placed on partnerships within the United Nations system: UNIDIR signed a memorandum of understanding on cooperation with the Mine Action Service in May 2016, and the Institute is exploring a joint project with UNITAR, which would feature UNIDIR work on small arms control in UNITAR training activities. UNIDIR is also co-sponsoring, together with the Secure World Foundation, the tenth United Nations Workshop on Space Law, organized by the Office for Outer Space Affairs in cooperation with the Office of Disarmament Affairs, to be held in September 2016.

68. Revenue and expenses for the first quarter of 2016 are contained in annex II, table 2, and projected institutional staff costs for 2016 are contained in annex IV. Most of the total amount of voluntary contributions is earmarked for specific projects. Projects and activities receive funding on a rolling basis throughout the year.

E. Projected activities and financial plan for 2017

69. A number of current projects will continue into 2017 and the rest of the 2017 programme of work will depend on securing funds for new projects. Nuclear issues will continue to feature prominently in the Institute's programme of work, which will be increasingly shaped by preparations for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Were the Conference on Disarmament to overcome its 20-year impasse and commence negotiations, UNIDIR would be expected to provide substantive support to the Conference and its members. Likewise, the convening of a Group of Governmental Experts on lethal autonomous weapons systems in 2017, in the context of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, would likely call upon the Institute's well-established expertise in this area. In the conventional arms area, the Institute's product development is expected to continue through the identification of new opportunities and client needs.

70. The financial expenditure to support the 2017 programme of work is projected at 2,531,000, as shown in annex III. The projected institutional operations budget for 2017 is contained in annex V.

IV. Looking ahead: mobilizing resources for operations

71. The five mechanisms for financing UNIDIR outlined in A/70/177 (see paras. 80-87) remain the same. In this connection it should be noted that a number of States have expressed support for the possibility of the General Assembly commissioning specific studies from UNIDIR, and that in 2015 the Institute secured a sizable project grant from a major private foundation for the first time in many years.

72. As UNIDIR continues to successfully generate funds for project activities, the remaining challenge before Member States, individually and collectively, is to decide how the operating costs (the institutional operations budget) can be covered in a sustained way in order to support UNIDIR substantive work.

73. The year 2015 marked the Institute's thirty-fifth anniversary and the adoption by consensus of General Assembly resolution 70/69. It requested the Secretary-General, "as an exceptional, one-off measure to preserve the future of the Institute

and without setting a precedent, to submit, in the context of the programme budget for the biennium 2018-2019, a funding proposal taking into account additional resources in the light of the recommendations contained in the latest report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters". The proposal is informed by an assessment of UNIDIR core staffing requirements, prepared by the Secretariat in the first half of 2016.

74. The Secretary-General was also mandated by the resolution to commission an assessment by an independent third party in order to outline a "sustainable and stable funding structure and operating model" to achieve the Institute's mandate and objectives beyond 2019. Taking into account that assessment, the Secretary-General is to report to the General Assembly at its seventy-third session.

75. The key task of the third-party assessment will be to consider the "future structural, financial, administrative and operational aspects of the Institute", essentially the elements necessary in order for UNIDIR to deliver on its mandate. As UNIDIR is embedded in the United Nations and, in accordance its mandate, is required to follow United Nations rules and policies, the endeavour will require considerable engagement by a variety of offices within the Secretariat.

V. Conclusion

76. While 2015 was a year of transition and stabilization, in 2016 the Institute has embarked on realizing its vision of a revitalized UNIDIR, a more resilient and sustainable Institute, with a work programme that continues to be relevant to the disarmament community in a rapidly changing world and facilitates a better understanding of the issues and a more effective policy response. It will entail a less reactive operating model and a more secure future for the Institute. It should free the Institute from the daily administrative struggles and empower management and research staff together to plan more strategically for the direction of future UNIDIR activities. The goal is for the revitalization process to be concluded by the end of 2017, which is a realistic yet ambitious time frame.

77. At a time when Member States are calling for increased efficiencies and when the United Nations enterprise resource management tool, Umoja, aims at realizing maximum economies of scale, very small, extrabudgetary entities such as UNIDIR find standardization difficult to reconcile with unpredictable funding. At the same time, Member States have continued to express their support, both financial and political, to UNIDIR and to value its work. Together with the backing of the United Nations administration, the support of Member States gives confidence in the Institute's ability to continue to provide independent and high-quality analysis and advice to the disarmament community well into the future.

Annex I

Adoption of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards

1. The financial statements of the United Nations are prepared in accordance with the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS). UNIDIR financial statements for 2015 were likewise prepared in accordance with IPSAS. In prior years, the financial statements were prepared in accordance with the United Nations system accounting standards.

Highlights of key changes to the financial statements resulting from the adoption of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards

2. Financial statements prepared in accordance with IPSAS apply full accrual-based accounting, which is a significant change from the modified cash basis of accounting previously applied under United Nations system accounting standards. It requires the recognition of transactions and events when they occur and the presentation of all assets and liabilities of the entity appropriately valued at the reporting date. Accordingly, the accounting policies of the Organization and UNIDIR have been updated to support compliance with IPSAS.

3. **Assets.** Under United Nations system accounting standards, physical assets and intangibles were expensed when purchased and did not appear on the balance sheet; under IPSAS, the Organization reports property, plant and equipment, inventories and intangible assets on the face of the financial statements. Assets qualifying as financial instruments are fair valued at the market rate. Allowance accounts have been created to adjust doubtful accounts receivable in accordance with IPSAS.

4. **Liabilities.** Under United Nations system accounting standards, only some liabilities were recognized; under IPSAS, all liabilities are recognized. With IPSAS, the Organization recognized its long-term employee benefits liabilities of after-service health insurance, unused annual leave and accrued repatriation benefits. Accrued liabilities for after-service health insurance are centrally recorded in separate funds for each United Nations entity reflected in Volume I of the financial report and audited financial statements and report of the Board of Auditors (UNIDIR being among those entities) and are therefore not shown as liabilities on individual trust fund statements. Reserves for other staff benefits and liabilities, such as repatriation, annual leave and those matters covered by appendix D to the Staff Rules, are also on separate funds and not shown on the Institute's financial statement. Staff benefits and liabilities are described in more details in pages 130 to 132 of the notes to the Financial Report and Audited Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2014 (A/70/5 (Vol. I) and Corr.1).

5. **Revenue.** Under IPSAS, the Organization changed the revenue recognition point for its voluntary contributions. Revenue is now recognized when an agreement to provide unconditional voluntary funding is signed. Recognition of revenue for voluntary contributions is for the total amount of the agreement, including any pledge for funding to be received in future years, even before receipt of cash.

6. **Expenses.** Expenses are now recorded in the financial statements only when goods or services have been received, and not when commitments have been made,

as was the case under United Nations system accounting standards. Therefore, under IPSAS, commitments against budgets do not qualify as expenses in the financial statements while accrued expenses for goods and services received during the year are recorded. As is done for liabilities, expenses for after-service health insurance and staff benefits, such as education grants, repatriation, annual leave and those matters covered by appendix D to the Staff Rules, are now also recorded in the financial statement. They are centrally recorded in separate funds for each United Nations entity reflected in Volume I of the financial report and audited financial statements and report of the Board of Auditors and therefore are not shown on individual trust fund statements.

Annex II

Table 1
Projected income and expenditure for 2015 and 2016[a]
(Thousands of United States dollars)

Description	*Projections for 2015*	*Projections for 2016*
Fund balance at the beginning of the period[b]	1 603.9	1 961.0
Income		
Voluntary contributions and public donations	2 802.5	2 870.4
Subvention from the United Nations regular budget	303.8	292.3
Other inter-organization contributions	30.8	34.3
Interest income	9.6	11.8
Miscellaneous income	18.3	18.6
Total income	3 165.1	3 227.4
Prior-period adjustments	3.1	0.3
Refund to donors[c]	(41.1)	(48.0)
Prior-period obligations	15.7	18.4
Total funds available	4 746.7	5 159.1
Direct expenditure		
Institutional expenditure		
Staff and other personnel costs	991.7	1 167.6
Institutional travel	15.9	15.2
Operating expenses	57.4	60.7
Project-related costs		
Staff and other personnel costs	1 246.5	1 238.7
Travel	126.1	123.1
Contractual services	79.2	72.7
Acquisitions	15.9	14.9
Fellowships, grants and other	109.7	128.0
Total direct expenditure	2 642.3	2 821.0
Programme support costs	143.4	147.7
Total expenditure	2 785.6	2 968.7
Fund balance at the end of the period	1 961.0	2 190.4

[a] Projections (United Nations system accounting standards basis) as presented in document A/70/177.
[b] Funds committed in accordance with donor agreements.
[c] In accordance with specific contribution agreements, refunds are issued to donors when specific project activities are modified and/or result in actual expenditures being lower than the amount initially foreseen in the budget agreed upon by the donors.

Table 2
Actual revenue and expenses for 2014, 2015 and first quarter of 2016[a]
(Thousands of United States dollars)

Description	*2014*	*2015*	*First quarter 2016*
Revenue			
Voluntary contributions[b]	3 754	2 403	608
Investment income	10	11	5
Other transfers and allocations	321	524	420
Other revenue	6	30	20
Total revenue	**4 091**	**2 968**	**1 053**
Expenses			
Employee salaries, allowances and benefits	2 045	1 427[c]	257[d]
Non-employee compensation and allowances	245	176	111
Grants and other transfers	80	39	0
Supplies and consumables	5	0	0
Travel	120	101	63
Other operating expenses	287	213	9
Programme support and prorated expenses	124	110	22
Other expenses	16	8	0
Total expenses	**2 922**	**2 074**	**462**
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	**1 169**	**894**	**591**

[a] Figures for 2014-2015 are from UNIDIR statement of financial performance for the year ended 31 December 2015. The statement was prepared in accordance with IPSAS.

[b] The perceived decrease in revenue in 2015 is the result of the difference in accounting systems as the United Nations transitions from United Nations system accounting standards to IPSAS. In particular, the perceived decrease is the result of the change in the recognition point for voluntary contributions. Under IPSAS, contributions are accounted for in the year in which the pledge is signed, for present as well as for future years. As a consequence, a number of significant disbursements to the Institute are not reflected in the 2015 accounts.

[c] Of this amount, institutional staff costs in 2015 amount to $996,438.

[d] Institutional staff costs for the first quarter of 2016 amount to $271,579. An amount of $50,550.50 pertaining to October 2015 salary advances that were accrued in 2015 were reversed in the first quarter of 2016. In the light of this reversal, the total amount of employee salaries, allowances and benefits appears lower than actually incurred.

Table 3
Details of voluntary contributions for 2015[a]
(United States dollars)

	Amount
A. Voluntary contributions	
Australia	111 852
Austria	5 525[b]
Canada	19 606
China	20 000
Estonia	5 495[c]
European Union	15 069
Finland	261 202[d]
France	160 000
Germany	569 890[e]
Hungary	11 338
India	15 000
Ireland	166 900[f]
Kazakhstan	19 975[g]
Luxembourg	17 260[h]
Mexico	10 000
Netherlands	367 490
Norway	132 240[i]
Pakistan	4 969
Qatar	10 000
Russian Federation	100 000
Serbia	2 000
Switzerland	288 974[j]
Turkey	5 000
United Arab Emirates	10 000
United States of America	10 000
Fondation pour la recherche stratégique	10 604
MacArthur Foundation	110 000
Simons Foundation	20 005
Refund to donors	(77 722)
Subtotal, A	**2 402 672**
B. Other transfers and allocations	
Subvention from the United Nations regular budget	328 700[k]
Office for Disarmament Affairs	79 500

	Amount
United Nations Office for Project Services	27 531
United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation	88 378
Subtotal, B	**524 109**
Total	**2 926 781**

[a] Figures are based on UNIDIR statement of financial performance for the year ended 31 December 2015. The statement was prepared in accordance with IPSAS. See introductory paragraphs on the adoption of IPSAS and the key changes between IPSAS and United Nations system accounting standards.

[b] An additional $30,979 pledged for 2015 are recorded under IPSAS in year 2014 when the agreement was signed.

[c] Contribution for 2016.

[d] Of this amount, $108,933 represent a pledge for 2016.

[e] Of this amount, $113,379 represent a pledge for 2016.

[f] Of this amount, $100,000 represent a pledge for 2016.

[g] Of this amount, $9,975 for the year 2014 were recorded in 2015.

[h] Of this amount, $8,824 for the year 2014 were received in 2015.

[i] An additional $775,555 pledged for 2015 are recorded under IPSAS in year 2014 when the agreement was signed.

[j] An additional $147,033 pledged for 2015 are recorded under IPSAS in year 2014 when the relevant agreements were signed.

[k] Of this amount, $27,800 represent an advance received at the end of 2015 for the year 2016.

Annex III

Projected revenue and expenses for 2017[a]

(Thousands of United States dollars)

Description	*2017*
Revenue	
Voluntary contributions	3 120
Investment income	11
Other transfers and allocations	428
Other revenue	18
Total revenue	**3 577**
Expenses	
Employee salaries, allowances and benefits	1 759
Non-employee compensation and allowances	213
Grants and other transfers	60
Supplies and consumables	3
Travel	112
Other operating expenses	253
Programme support and prorated expenses	119
Other expenses	12
Total expenses	**2 531**
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	**1 046**

[a] Projections for 2017 were calculated as an average of the years 2014, 2015 and 2016, plus 1 per cent.

Annex IV

Projected institutional staff costs for 2016[a]

(Thousands of United States dollars)

2016	*Total net salary*	*Staff assessment*	*Common staff costs*	*Representation allowances*	*Total*
United Nations contracts					
D-2	213.8	36.9	72.9	0.6	324.2
P-5	177.1	27.1	60.4	–	264.6
P-5	177.1	27.1	60.4	–	264.6
P-3	125.8	17.2	42.9	–	185.9
2 GS (OL)	190.4	70.6	65.0	–	326.0
Total	**884.2**	**178.9**	**301.6**	**0.6**	**1 365.3**

Abbreviation: GS (OL), General Service (Other level).

Annex V

Institutional operations budget for 2017

(Thousands of United States dollars)

	Amount
Institutional staff[a]	
D-2	324.2
P-5	264.6
P-5	264.6
P-3	185.9
1 GS (OL)	163.7
Subtotal, institutional staff	**1 203.0**
Travel	20.0
Communications and outreach	10.0
Information and Communications Technology Service	18.0
Telecommunications	6.0
Miscellaneous operating costs	17.0
Subtotal, institutional operating costs	**71.0**
Subtotal	**1 274.0**
Programme support costs	63.7
Total	**1 337.7**

Abbreviation: GS (OL), General Service (Other level).

[a] Based on standard salary costs for the biennium 2016-2017 applicable to Geneva (version 9).